

2/15/59

Memorandum on ~~xxx~~ exobial work. Week of Febr. 9. (Mon.) 1959

I saw Luria at the phage meeting in ~~XXXX~~ Berkeley on Febr. 2 and had lunch for the discussion. He transmitted Rossi's interest and I agreed to hold a West Coast discussion meeting as early as possible, with Stanier's help. Aaron Novick was also at the meeting, and he agreed to come down. He also made some notes from our discussion for a preliminary briefing of Noyes (US delegate to ~~XXXX~~ COSPAR). I had one or two talks with Stanier last week and we got together a list of useful participants. I called Urey and found he couldn't come. Norm Horowitz at Caltech could; he consulted Harry Brown and he couldn't, but NH suggested Davies from the JPL instead. Locally I called Soske who is interested but thought that Krauskopf and Bracewell were more immediately concerned. The latter both accepted. I also called LePage at SRI to suggest someone from there (especially as they would be most useful for subcontracting on the design problems). Fred Kamphoefner called and said he would come on the 20th not the 21st. But it would be most inconvenient for Novick, so I will talk to Kamphoefner later.

This meeting was at Rossi's instigation, and would be advice to him and the Space Board of the NAS. I have still to get the details on membership etc; presumably this advises NASA.

On Wednesday this week, Bob Jastrow called me and said he was heading an NASA working group on planetary exploration. He was concerned that they would not be able to adequately sterilize an instrumented moonshot they had in mind. (Gold had visited Stanford on Friday Jan 30 and was quite certain that no particle could escape heating after uncontrolled impact; Jastrow assured me they were working on a device to survive impact!) What did I think. He was insistent that I should come to Washington on Saturday, the 14th, for the planning meeting. I replied this was impossible; how much could we do by phone. Wednesday night I wrote up a memorandum "Contamination of a planetary surface by interplanetary missiles". (Meanwhile, Herzenberg was here, Sun-Thurs.) Thurs. AM I called Jastrow again and started to dictate the memo to his secretary. Then stopped when I realized Herz. could be courier. ~~XXX~~ Jastrow then asked me to join his group for biological planning-- I accepted on proviso I could veto my travel. He stressed that the Space Board NAS was 'purely advisory'. So this will work out that I will be advising myself next Saturday meeting. The channels are obviously shifting all the time. I am planning to install a speaker-micro-telephone system and to insist on doing most of the work by longdistance phone.

Thursday night we were at the Kaplans for dinner, and to meet Irving London (as possible Prof of Medicine). Also ~~at~~ there was Randall Bascom who works on the Big Mo Hole project at NAS. He mentioned what proved (by call to Struve) to be Alter work on the Alphonsas obscuration, and Struve also gave me the lead to Koryzev's note in Sky and Telescope on the 'volcanic' emission (written up a while ago in ~~XXXXXX~~ NY Times). This may prove to alter the picture markedly on the possible viability of transported organisms.

Monday the 9th, I also had a call from Odishaw who (according to Bascom) is a non-scientist exec. director of the Space Board. Over the phone he initially sounded a bit hostile qua my entirely negative attitude, but he seemed more reassured after a bit, and then invited me to join the US representation to CETEX at The Hague March 9. I refused but we agreed that the report from our group next week would be most useful. I will have a memo elsewhere listing the travelling we've already done, and there can be no doubt that much more will be insistently imposed.

also this week - Joe Levin Mon. PM!